

Slavery

John Newton: Former Slaver turned Preacher/Writer
1725-1807
(A Slave to His Memory)

A ship
rotting with the skeletons of slaves

Whips crackle.
Skin smolders with every tossing wave

Ebony bushes
spill wounds of Black blood congealing

20,000 ghosts
in this little church permeate my being

Grown man
cowering in the corner of a shadow

Bloody hands
bowling souls into the briny flow

The bones
sink in my mind to the words of my pen

Ouladah Equiano: Former Slave turned Abolitionist
1745-1797
(A Slave to Man)

Branded with blazing fire
This symbol on my skin
signifies I am no longer God's.
My body will waste for sugar lumps

Ship shackles
dislocate my hip
I remember Africa

Screams of Black threads surround me
One snaps.

And she is blanketed by the sea

I remember Africa

**William Wilberforce: Great Abolitionist Speaker/Politician
1759-1833**

(A Slave to His Mission)

Breathe in that death scent until your lungs pray to suffocate
I roll in these bloody streets of retch and disguised dysentery
And my vocal chords anguish and ache from Parliament screams

How I long...
for
spider's webs

But the endless shrieks of children screaming from their skin scalded by liquid lava
rolling and writhing into the fire when there should have been serene dreams
all to produce a couple poisonous pounds of pure sugar in the raw
fills my opium-ed mind with Black nightmares of slaves

How I long...
for
dandelions

But my hands are scarred and weighted from wielding the work of thousands
We're using nails to scrape the blood from ships, from ports, from plantations
Aching petitioning pages drowning in the ink of names, names, names
A million suffering candles surrendering their wax to read them

One by one, by one, by one, by one...